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## PDP, CONG SEEK ROLLBACK ON 3RD ANNIV OF HOLLOWING 370

**The two parties held protest marches on Friday to mark the third anniversary of the repeal of Jammu and Kashmir's special status**

### 88% DROP IN LAW & ORDER INCIDENTS: POLICE

Law and order incidents dropped 88% in three years since the revocation of the erstwhile state's special status compared to the preceding three years, police said. From August 5, 2016 to August 4, 2019, the Valley witnessed 3,686 law and order incidents, which came down to 438 since August 5, 2019 when the Centre bifurcated it into two Union territories

### SOLVE KASHMIR DISPUTE VIA TALKS: CHINA

- While Pakistan is reportedly using its embassies in West Asia and Europe to keep the Kashmir issue alive, China said New Delhi and Islamabad should resolve disputes through dialogue
- "This is an issue leftover from history," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying | P10

**930**

TERROR INCIDENTS DURING 2016-2019. THIS DROPPED TO 617 IN THE NEXT 3 YRS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

**No immunity in criminal cases: Naidu**

MPs have no immunity from arrest in criminal cases during Parliament session, Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu said on Friday

**Their ministers cannot see the price rise, so we wanted to walk to PM's house and show him the high inflation, show him the gas cylinder the price of which is sky high**

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra crossing police barricades during a protest march, in New Delhi on Friday | SHEKHAR YADAV

# RBI signals end of cheap loans era

Loans to cost more as central bank goes for an aggressive 50-basis point hike in repo rate

MONIKA YADAV @New Delhi

LOANS are all set to become more expensive with the Reserve Bank of India on Friday increasing the repo rate (at which it lends money to commercial banks) by 0.5% to 5.4% with immediate effect.

Home and car loans, which are linked to repo rates, will feel the pinch immediately as the transmission of RBI rate action is instant in such cases. The interest rates are already around 7.55% for borrowers with high credit scores. With the latest hike, it could go past 8%. That will be a substantial increase considering that in the beginning of the year, home loan rates were just 6.65%.

ICICI Bank and Punjab National Bank have already raised their lending rates after the central bank increased the benchmark interest rate on Friday.

Y Viswanatha Gowd, MD & CEO of LIC Housing Finance, said the repo rate hike will cause some fluctuation in the EMIs or the tenure on the home loans but the demand for housing is likely to remain robust. A back-of-the-envelope calculation shows the EMI on a ₹50-lakh loan with 20-year tenure will increase by ₹1,518.

On the positive side, those with fixed deposits in banks will gain as their rates will also go up, albeit slowly. At present, fixed deposit rates of one-year tenure range from 5.6% to 6.3%.

RBI has so far raised the repo rate by a total of 1.4% since May. With the latest hike, it has reversed the Covid-era cuts completely. The present repo rate at 5.25% is higher than the pre-Covid level of 5.15%.

Justifying the hike, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said the regulator was forced to act as inflation remained at "unacceptably high levels".

RBI retained its inflation outlook for the current fiscal at 6.7%, while the regulator is mandated to keep it under 6%.

Das said India's economy is improving, thanks to revival in urban demand. RBI has pegged FY23 GDP growth at 7.2%. P13

### BANKS CAN'T RELY ON RBI MONEY FOREVER: DAS

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday that banks cannot "perennially" rely on the central bank's money to support credit offtake and they need to mobilise more deposits to aid credit growth

## PUNEETH TO BE AWARDED K'TAKA RATNA

CM Bommai on Friday announced that actor late Puneeth Rajkumar will be conferred with the Karnataka Ratna award on November 1 | P2

**POWER-PAK DEEPAK**

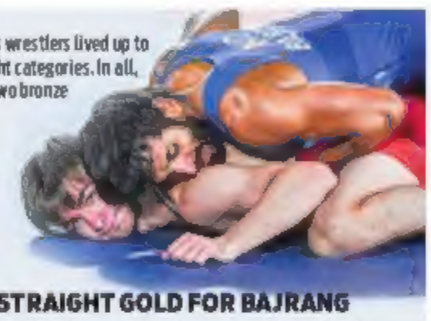
Bajrang and Sakshi won the first two gold medals. Deepak Punia (L) saved the best for last as he beat an opponent from Pak Muhammad Inam, a two-time CWG gold-medallist, 3-0. The first gold for Inam had come at the 2010 CWG. He defeated local favourite Anuj Kumar in the final. Inam won gold in 2018 beating Nigerian Bibo Mellvin

## GOOD FRIDAY

Friday was big day for India at CWG as its wrestlers lived up to their billing to win medals in all six weight categories. In all, they claimed three gold, one silver and two bronze

**THIRD TIME LUCKY FOR SAKSHI MALIK**

Gold seemed to be eluding the 2016 Rio Olympic Sakshi Malik but the Haryana wrestler came from behind to pin Ana Godinez Gonzalez from Canada in the final to complete a hat-trick of medals at the event. She won 58kg silver in 2014 and 62kg bronze in the 2018 editions | P15



**SECOND STRAIGHT GOLD FOR BAJRANG**

Bajrang Punia (65kg) won second consecutive CWG gold and third medal in a row at the event (silver in 2014) as he outclassed Canada's wrestler Lachlan McNeil 9-2 in the final

# GANDHIS AMONG 300+ DETAINED AFTER PROTEST

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

CONGRESS leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra led a strong nationwide protest from the front against price rise, GST on essential items and unemployment, with the latter catching the eye as she climbed over barricades and sat on the road outside the AICC office. Both were among the 300-plus who were detained by the police for over six hours.

Rahul set the ball rolling by tearing into the government, saying the country is witnessing "death of democracy". "The government wants that people's issues should not be raised and is working for the benefit of 4-5 big businessmen. All institutions in the country are under the control of the BJP and RSS. Despite all this, the Opposition is making efforts to fight against the government," he said.

**Standing for democracy**

"The more I raise people's issues, the more I will be under attack from the government but I will continue to stand for democracy," Rahul Gandhi told the media

Dressed in black as a mark of protest, Congress MPs marched towards Rashtrapati Bhavan from Parliament House. They were stopped at Vijay Chowk by the police in view of the security protocol. The leaders, then, sat in protest at Vijay Chowk.

Priyanka and other senior leaders, including Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, were stopped outside Congress headquarters at 24, Akbar Road while they were marching towards the Prime Minister's residence. After Priyanka squatted on the road, she was pulled into the police van and detained along with others.

"The government thinks it can silence us. It thinks that by showing us this force, it can make us quietly sit in buses but we have a purpose," Priyanka told reporters.

The detained leaders were taken to Kingsway Camp in GTB Nagar and were later released. The area around the Congress HQ was cordoned off since Wednesday and a large police force deployed.

# Dentist mother throws kid off fourth floor, surrenders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a shocking incident, a 34-year-old dentist killed her four-year-old mentally challenged daughter by throwing her from the fourth floor of their apartment in S R Nagar police station limits on Thursday afternoon. The accused then tried to cover up the incident by making it look like an accidental fall. She also tried to draw the attention of neighbours by screaming for help.

However, a CCTV footage from inside the apartment showed that she actually threw the child from the fourth floor of the building. She then approached the police along with a lawyer and surrendered before the jurisdictional SR Nagar police at 9.30 pm on Thursday.

A CCTV screengrab of the ghastly incident | EXPRESS

The police found out that three months ago, the accused had abandoned her daughter in a train and returned home alone. After her husband, Kiran, a software engineer, questioned her, she told him that their daughter had gone missing. The husband alerted the Railway authorities who helped him trace the girl in a train from Hassan and rescued her near Yelahanka.

The victim has been identified as K Dhuthi. The accused Sushma Bharadwada is a practising dentist. The family was staying in Advaith Ashray Apartment on Mission Road in Sudhama Nagar. The incident happened at 3 pm. The girl was immediately rushed to Nimhans by her father. However, she died during treatment at 4.50 pm. P3

# Wild speculation after Didi meets PM, discusses dues

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR, PRONAB MONDAL @New Delhi/Kolkata

TRINAMOOL head and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had a rather quiet meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi for 45 minutes here on Friday sparking wild speculation of a rapprochement ahead of the 2024 polls.

This was a different Didi Delhi got to see as there was no post-meeting briefing, no signalling of Opposition unity to fight the BJP. Ironically, it happened on a day when the Congress hit the streets raising pro-people issues like price rise—the party Mamata had in the past faulted for sleeping at the wheel of Opposition leadership.

Former Meghalaya governor Tathagata Roy set Twitter afire about the 'secret setting'. The CPI(M) and Congress echoed him, alleging Mamata's underhand deal with the BJP.

TMC sources said Mamata took up various issues like MNGREGA dues and GST and submitted a memorandum to the PM, quantifying the total dues at ₹1,00,968.44 crore.

She is also understood to have taken up raids on her party leaders by Central agencies.

"Remember her recent meeting with Jagdeep Dhankhar? Subsequently, Dhankhar became NDA's nominee for V-P and the TMC decided to abstain from voting," said political analyst R K Verma said.

# In a first, Guv to visit homes of freedom fighters

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

ON the 80th anniversary of Quit India Movement which falls on August 9, Karnataka Governor Thaawar Chand Gehlot is going a step further in honouring freedom fighters. For the first time, the governor will be personally going to freedom fighters' homes to felicitate them.

The tradition so far has been to invite the freedom fighters to the Glass House in Raj Bhavan for high-tea.

In 1942, it was on this day that the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement with the slogan 'Do or Die', a protest demanding an end to British rule in India. In Karnataka, Quit India Movement had turned violent in places like Dharwad, Belagavi, Mysuru, Vijayapura and Bengaluru districts where many youth, including students took part after boycotting their classes. Every year, this day is observed across the nation.

On July 28, Special Secretary to Governor, R Prabhushankar wrote a letter to Chief Secretary Vandita Sharma where he mentioned the governor's plans. P6

# ED freezes ₹64.67 cr in bank accounts of crypto exchange WazirX

BALA CHAUHAN @Bengaluru

THE Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has frozen bank assets worth Rs 64.67 crore of a director of Zanmai Lab Pvt Ltd, which owns WazirX - the popular crypto-currency exchange.

ED is conducting money laundering investigation against a number of Indian NBFC companies and their fintech partners for predatory lending practices in violation of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines and by using tele-callers who misuse personal data and use abusive language to extort high interest rates from loan takers. "Various fintech companies backed by Chinese funds could not get NBFC licence from RBI for carrying out lending business. So, they devised the MoU route with defunct NBFCs to piggyback on their licence," the ED stated in an official release on Friday.

After the investigation began, many of these fintech Apps have shut shop and diverted the huge profits earned using the above mentioned modus operandi. In the fund trail investigation, ED found huge funds diverted by the fintech companies to purchase crypto assets and then launder them abroad. These companies and the virtual assets are untraceable at the moment. Summons were issued to crypto exchanges.

"It is seen that the maximum amount of funds were diverted to WazirX exchange and the crypto assets so purchased have been diverted to unknown foreign wallets. During our probe, it was observed that Zanmai had created a web of agreements with Crowdfire Inc, USA, Binance (Cayman Islands), Zettai Pte Ltd Singapore to obscure the ownership of the crypto exchange," said the probing agency.

The ED stated, "Managing Director, WazirX - Nischal Shetty - had claimed that WazirX is an Indian exchange which controls all crypto-crypto and INR-crypto transactions and only has an IP and preferential agreement with Binance." P13

**FARMERS SEE RED**

As prices of tomatoes fell to ₹1 per kg, frustrated farmers dump their produce on NH 150A near Chitradurga on Friday. Truck drivers and people passing by the road were seen collecting the vegetable from the site | EXPRESS | P4

**EXPRESS READ**

### CUET exam marred by glitches for second day

New Delhi: For the second consecutive day, harried students and parents had a tough time when many CUET-UG centres cancelled exams due to technical glitches. In a late night statement, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said examinations scheduled for the first shift have been postponed at 20 centres, while at 30 centres the second shift exam has been similarly put off. P10

### PSI CET scam: CID nabs 8 more suspects

Kalaburagi: Sleuths of Crime Investigation Department (CID) probing the PSI CET Scam arrested eight more accused on Thursday evening and produced them before a court on Friday, sources told The New Indian Express here on Friday. The arrested include the 1st rank holder in PSI CET under Hyderabad-Karnataka quota. The arrests were made following a tip-off from the accused who are in judicial custody. P4

**10+ YEARS**

# Couple on Kerala leg of their forever honeymoon

ANU KURUVILLA @Kochi

HOW long is a honeymoon trip? It may range from a few days and a couple of weeks to maybe a month. But the answer could be 'forever', if you ask Ann and Mike Howard from New York.

The couple, who got married in 2012, has been on honeymoon ever since — that's 10 years and counting — visiting 64 countries and taking in everything the nations have to offer.

And, no, they are not planning to stop anytime soon as travelling has become part of their lives.

The couple travel on a shoestring budget – $34 per person per day (around ₹2,700). "We never plan anything... keep our itinerary flexible. That's our mantra," said Anne.

So far, the duo has covered European as well as North and South American nations. For India, their 65th country, they chose to start from Kerala.

"We flew in from Bhutan," said Mike, 45, who met Anne, 40, in New Jersey while playing two-on-two volleyball.

Ann and Mike Howard | EXPRESS

The couple, both vegetarians, said anyone planning a trip to India should start from Kerala. "Kerala serves as India's gateway for tourists. It is also mellower than other places while being a melting pot of cultures from across the globe," said Mike, who has co-authored with Anne two books, *Ultimate Journeys for Two*, which is a travel guide for couples, and *Comfortably Wild: The Best Glamping Destinations in North America*.